
BZA-1868
CITY OF WEST LAFAYETTE
Sign Area Variance

STAFF REPORT
November 29, 2012

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REQUEST MADE, PROPOSED USE, LOCATION:

Petitioner, represented by Chandler Poole its Director of Development and by American Structurepoint, is requesting a variance to allow 89.49 square feet of signage instead of the maximum permitted 42.9 square feet for the new West Lafayette fire station #3 located at 1100 Kalberer Road, West Lafayette, Wabash 6 (NW) 23-4.

The original request, for 203.84 square feet of signage, included three incidental signs (the address, the fire station number, and the fire station emblem) that both APC staff and City Engineer's Office staff agree do not need to be included in the overall amount of signage.

AREA ZONING PATTERNS:

The site, the only lot within this phase of the Purdue Research Park Subdivision that has been final platted, is zoned R1, Single-family Residential. All surrounding land is also zoned R1 except to the southwest which is zoned PDRS. I3 and OR zoning exist west of Yeager.

AREA LAND USE PATTERNS:

The fire station, approved by special exception in September 2011 (BZA-1832) is nearing completion; all other surrounding land on the north side of Kalberer is unimproved. The single-family houses of Amberleigh Village PD are to the southwest. West Lafayette Parks and Recreation have soccer fields and baseball diamonds to the southeast.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION:

Kalberer Road is an urban primary arterial according to the adopted *Thoroughfare Plan*. The speed limit in front of the fire station is 35 MPH. While the site in question only has road frontage on one existing street, approved preliminary plans for Purdue Research Park Subdivision show that once the lots around it are final platted, the fire station lot will have streets on three sides.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Petitioner is proposing a fascia sign that is 48.9' x 1.83' reading "West Lafayette Fire Department" in white letters against a red background. Currently the site in question is permitted a total of 42.9 square feet of signage. The starting point is 20 square feet, since the fire station is considered an "institutional use" within the R1 zone. The station's allotment of signage gets bonuses due to the speed limit in front of the building, the distance the building is set back from the road (81'), and the fact that while permitted a single freestanding sign, petitioner is not going to install any. These bonuses bump up the maximum from 20 square feet to 42.9 square feet of permitted signage (see attached sign worksheet).

If the planned roads to the west and north of the site were already constructed or even final platted, the signage total permitted on this site would more than double. With those additional roads in place, 89.9 square feet would become the maximum allowed, and this variance request would be unnecessary.

Regarding this case, the Area Plan Commission unanimously voted that the sign ordinance be strictly adhered to.

Regarding the ballot items:

1. The Area Plan Commission on November 21st determined that the variance requested **IS NOT** a use variance.

And it is staff's opinion that:

2. Granting this variance **WILL NOT** be injurious to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community. The signage proposed would adequately and tastefully identify the building and its purpose.
3. Use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance request **WILL NOT** be affected in a substantially adverse manner. This request for larger fascia signage would not negatively impact surrounding properties.
4. The terms of the zoning ordinance are being applied to a situation that **IS NOT** common to other properties in the same zoning district. The unusual situation is that once the planned streets are in place surrounding the fire station and the amount of permitted signage increases, this variance will not be needed.
5. Strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance **WILL** result in an unusual or unnecessary hardship as defined in the zoning ordinance. The hardship in this case is requiring petitioner to meet the sign requirements with the existing condition of having only one road frontage while knowing in the future, three road frontages will exist.

Note: Questions 5a. and 5b. need only be answered if a hardship is found in Question 5 above.

5a. The hardship involved **IS NOT** self-imposed or solely based on a perceived reduction of or restriction on economic gain. The hardship is due to the timing of neighboring road improvements.

5b. The variance sought **DOES** provide only the minimum relief needed to alleviate the hardship since it is within what will be the site's future signage maximum.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval